

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 ACDA-07 /091 W

-----120944Z 015323 /22

R 111742Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY BAMA KO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5509

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAMA KO 0154

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, ML, XJ

SUBJECT: FRANCO -AFRICAN DAKAR CONFERENCE

REF: (A) STATE 2032, (B) BAMA KO 049

1. MALI IS ONE OF STATES WHOSE
SUPPORT FOR SOVIET-CUBAN
EFFORTS IN ANGOLA AND WHOSE ACCEPTANCE OF INCREASED SOVIET
MILITARY ASSISTANCE HAVE AROUSED CONCERN IN NEIGHBORING
COUNTRIES. SHOULD WORRIED STATES SET UP COLLABORATIVE
DEFENSE ARRANGEMENTS AT DAKAR CONFERENCE, MALI WOULD
UNDOUBTEDLY FEEL ISOLATED AND IN EVEN GREATER NEED OF
SOVIET SUPPORT. CONFERENCE COULD, HOWEVER, PROVIDE
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IDEAL OPPORTUNITY FOR OTHER STATES TO ENMOURAGE REDUCTION
IN MALIAN DEPENDENCE ON SOVIET ASSISTANCE. IN THIS
REGARD, FOLLOWING FACTORS ARE RELEVANT:

). IN MALIAN PERSPECTIVE, SOVIET UNION IS ONLY ADEQUATE
SOURCE OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE. WEST GERMAN MILITARY
AID TO MALI IS LIMITED TO LIGHT ENGINEER TRAINING SUPPORT

AND A FOUR-MAN MILITARY MISSION IN BAMAKO (ONE LT. COL. AND THREE NCO'S). CHINESE CANNOT PROVIDE LEVEL OF FUNDING OR HARDWARE MALIANS WANT. RETURN TO RELIANCE ON FRENCH SOURCES WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE REGRESSION TO COLONIAL MODE.

MALI RECOGNIZES THAT UNITED STATES WISHES TO CONCENTRATE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. MALI IS DETERMINED TO HAVE WHAT ITS BANKRUPT COFFERS CANNOT AFFORD--A MODERN ARMED FORCE --AND HAS TURNED TO SOVIET UNION TO PROVIDE IT.

3. MALI'S MILITARY RULERS DO NOT VIEW THEIR OWN MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT AS ANYTHING BUT MODEST. WITH SEVEN NEIGHBORING STATES AND ABOUT 4,400 MILES OF FRONTIER TO PATROL AND DEFEND, MALI'S 3,500-MAN ARMY IS NOT SEEN AS MENACING. WITH ANOTHER 1,500 MEN IN GENDARMERIE AND

BORDER PATROL UNITS, TOTAL ARMED STRENGTH IS ABOUT 5,000. IT INCLUDES SMALL SOVIET-TRAINED AND SUPPLIED AIR FORCE WITH THREE MIG-21'S AND FEWER THAN 10 MIG-15'S AND 17'S. MALI HAS TWO MILITARY TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT, A DC-3 AND AN ANTONOV-26.

4. WHILE NO LONGER CONCERNED ABOUT UPPER VOLTA BORDER, MALI DOES HAVE PROBLEMS WITH POLISARIO RAIDERS USING MALI AS SANCTUARY. WE BELIEVE THAT MALIANS HAVE PLEDGED TO MAURITANIANS TO PREVENT POLISARIO FROM USING MALIAN TERRITORY, A MOVE WHICH HAS INCURRED ALGERIAN DISPLEASURE. WE HEAR REPORTS THAT ALGERIANS HAVE MOVED SOME TROOPS ACROSS MALIAN BORDER IN REMOTE SIXTH REGION TO PUT
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PRESSURE ON MALI IN CONNECTION SAHARA ISSUE. MALIAN MILITARY CAPABILITY, ALTHOUGH MODEST IN COMPARISON TO THAT OF ALGERIA, DOES ENABLE MALI TO RESIST ALGERIAN PRESSURES AND CONTINUE ITS CLOSE ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP IN OMVS WITH MAURITANIA AND SENEGAL.

5. MALIAN LEADERSHIP DOES NOT UNIFORMLY FAVOR LARGE SOVIET MILITARY PROGRAM. SOME CIVILIAN LEADERS RESENT LACK OF EFFECTIVE SOVIET CONTRIBUTION TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. MINISTER OF DEFENSE WOULD LIKE TO DIVERSIFY SOURCES OF AID AND REDUCE DEPENDENCE ON SOVIETS. HE HAS REPEATEDLY REQUESTED ENGLISH-LANGUAGE LABORATORY FOR HIS OFFICERS. TO SOME MEMBERS OF RULING MILITARY COMMITTEE, DOMINANT SOVIET PRESENCE IS TOO REMINISCENT OF PREVIOUS KEITA REGIME.

6. MALIANS ARE EXTREMELY SENSITIVE TO CHARGES THAT SOVIET MILITARY ASSISTANCE INFLUENCES THEIR DECISIONS OR THAT SUPPORT FOR SOVIET-CUBAN EFFORTS IS ANYTHING BUT SOVEREIGN EXERCISE OF MALI'S NON-ALIGNED WILL. THIS

SENSITIVITY WILL MAKE MALI RESISTANT BUT NONETHELESS
VULNERABLE TO CRITICISM BY FELLOW AFRICAN STATES. MALI
WOULD NOT LIKE ITS MILITARY TIES TO INVALIDATE ITS
HALLOWED
NON-ALIGNED CREDENTIALS. FRANCO-AFRICAN CONFERENCE
IN DAKAR IS, THEREFORE, EXCELLENT OCCASION FOR OTHER
AFRICAN CHIEFS-OF-STATE TO INCREASE EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE
MALIAN PRESIDENT TRAORE TO RETURN TO TRUE NON-ALIGNMENT
AND TO KEEP SOVIET MILITARY ASSISTANCE WITHIN BOUNDS
ACCEPTABLE TO WEST AFRICAN COMMUNITY (REF B).
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, SECURITY, MILITARY ASSISTANCE, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 11-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BAMAKO00154
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770011-0740
Format: TEL
From: BAMAKO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770165/aaaacegs.tel
Line Count: 127
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b9e3b6db-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 2032, 77 BAMAKO 49
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3629109
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FRANCO -AFRICAN DAKAR CONFERENCE
TAGS: PFOR, UR, ML, XJ
To: STATE ABIDJAN
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b9e3b6db-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009